NRSC 🐘

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
RE: NRSC Political
DATE: July 24, 2025

OVERVIEW: Apple's iOS 26 Changes: Effects on Fundraising & Voter Contact

Apple's iOS 26 update introduces aggressive message filtering. Political texts—even from verified and compliant senders—will be treated as spam by default, silently sent to an "Unknown" inbox with no alerts or notifications. That change has profound implications for our ability to fundraise, mobilize voters, and run digital campaigns.

It's important to understand: Apple isn't just targeting cold outreach or spammy actors. Every political message —shortcode, long code, doesn't matter—gets pushed into the dark. The only workaround—getting a voter to reply—is increasingly rare and entirely at the mercy of Apple's unclear rules. How will a voter reply if they never get the message?

Here's the shift in practice. Today, a voter with an iPhone gets our message just like a normal text. In iOS 26, unless that person has already replied, our message is silently sent to the "Unknown" inbox. No ping, no badge, just buried in an inbox few people ever check.

We've spent years complying with rigorous standards—providing full documentation, opt-in proof, and message samples via Campaign Verify and The Campaign Registry—yet Apple ignores that. **Carriers respect it. Apple doesn't.**

Estimated prospecting losses: **NRSC alone could see a $25M+ revenue hit.** Since 70% of small-dollar donations come via text, and iPhones make up 60% of US mobile devices, **the macro effect could be over $500M in lost GOP revenue.**

But this isn't just about money—it's also about the impact on voter contact. GOTV messages, voter persuasion texts, rapid-response messaging, election day reminders—these are time-sensitive, critical communications. iOS 26 breaks all of that.

And we're not talking years out. Developer testing already started this month. **September is the public release.** By year's end, this will be the default experience for most voters with iPhones.

Unfortunately, K St and trade groups are asleep at the wheel. Apple isn't engaging. But we have only a few weeks left before the public release. **If we're going to push back, it has to be now. We have a very narrow window to fix this.**